

# Questions & Answers on 'Municipal Partnerships for Sustainability'

## Who is implementing the project?

### *The Service Agency Communities in One World*

The Service Agency is an institution that provides advisory and other services for municipal development cooperation. Since 1 February 2012 it has been operating under the umbrella of Engagement Global gGmbH. The Service Agency focuses on four development themes that are key to the future: 1. municipalities for global sustainability, 2. fair trade and fair procurement, 3. migration and development at the local level, 4. establishing and developing partnerships between German municipalities and municipalities in the Global South. The Service Agency is implementing the project 'Municipal Partnerships for Sustainability' on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

## What are the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

At the UN Summit in New York, on 25 September 2015 the international community adopted the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Agenda takes the form of a covenant for the global future, designed to help everyone in the world enjoy a dignified life. The 2030 Agenda was conceived in the spirit of a new global partnership – all divisions into 'donors' and 'recipients' or 'first', 'second' and 'third world' are superseded by the notion of shared responsibility for humankind and the planet. The Agenda's 17 SDGs link the principle of sustainability with economic, environmental and social development, thus uniting poverty alleviation and sustainability in a single agenda for the first time. The SDGs apply to all countries of the international community. All countries are called upon universally to commit to the 2030 Agenda, and work actively toward improving the situation of people and the environment in many important areas by 2030. Germany was among the 193 countries that signed this Agenda. Since the SDGs are very important to Germany, the Federal Chancellery is reworking the country's Strategy for Sustainability so as to integrate the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda into the new strategy. Germany's new Sustainability Strategy will be presented in Berlin on 31 May (Source: BMZ website, May 2015)

## What is a partnership for sustainability?

In a municipal partnership for sustainability, practitioners from two municipalities work together regularly on topics from the 2030 Agenda on a structured basis. The project offers two different approaches to achieving the SDGs at the local level (see below). Together with their partner municipality, the Germany municipality can choose one of these. The Service Agency will provide equal support to both approaches. Our targeted support will help enable municipalities to jointly overcome challenges they currently face by sharing lessons learned, coordinating their activities and transferring knowledge. A 'municipal partnership for sustainability' can arise in the context of a municipal partnership, friendship, link or theme-based partnership. German municipalities that do not yet have any links with an Eastern or South-eastern European municipality, but are interested in establishing such links, are also welcome.



## Objectives

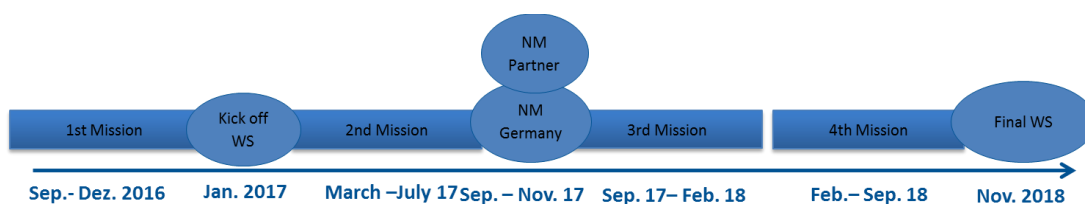
- The project will offer the municipalities an opportunity to establish a dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their municipal partnerships, and build strategic cooperation to achieve them. The expertise that the participating municipalities possess for tackling the SDGs will be harnessed and developed in the work of the partnerships by sharing lessons learned and transferring knowledge on a reciprocal basis. Partners will also aim to jointly implement various measures and activities for the 17 Goals.
- The project will strengthen partnerships between German municipalities and municipalities in partner countries of German development cooperation. During the pilot phase, this will target partnerships with municipalities in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. The project will aim to strategically develop the partnerships. Existing activities of the partnerships will be placed in the context of the SDGs, and strategic and integrated (i.e. cross-departmental) cooperation within the participating municipalities will be promoted.

## What services will the project 'Municipal Partnerships for Sustainability' offer?

- Advice and support for the process within the individual partnerships over a total period of two years
- Financing and organisation of the international exchange of experience between the partner municipalities (maximum of four short missions by delegations of three local government experts)
- Preparatory and training workshops prior to the exchange
- Networking of the municipalities participating in the pilot phase of the project through national and international workshops.
- Two international workshops and two network meetings are planned.
- Support for information and PR work
- Funding of one PR event in each municipality
- Funding of one pilot measure on the SDGs in each municipality (budget: up to € 5,000 per participating municipality, i.e. € 10,000 per partnership)

This service package is available to all participating partnerships, regardless of which approach they choose.

## Flow chart for the service package:



NM: Network Meeting; WS: Workshop;

The dates for the workshops and network meetings will be jointly agreed on a binding basis. The dates for the missions will be planned by the municipalities accordingly. The Service Agency will provide human resources as well as organisational, logistical and specialist support here. The missions, network meetings and international events will be organised by the Service Agency.

## What is expected of the participating municipalities?

- Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the objectives and key points of the partnership for sustainability
- Willingness to cooperate with the partner municipality in the field of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Guarantee of successful cooperation between the various dedicated departments within the municipality
- Active participation in the network of municipalities and international workshops

## Depending on the approach selected:

- Willingness to develop a concrete programme of action together with the partner municipality (approach 1), or
- Willingness to plan, implement and evaluate concrete measures with the partner municipality (approach 2).

## Why are we offering two different approaches?

Based on our research, the needs analysis for the municipalities and the findings of the Stakeholder Workshop, we have established that the municipalities are at different stages in the process of developing their sustainability strategies. This is why we decided on two approaches.

The international network United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) also recommends these two paths for achieving sustainable strategic development at the local level.<sup>1</sup>

## What are the two approaches offered in the project?

### a) Approach 1 (top-down): Working together towards a sustainability strategy

This approach will focus on the existing sustainability strategies of the participating municipalities. In cases where no integrated sustainability strategy is yet in place, other municipal strategies with links to sustainability issues will be used as a basis. Within the partnership, the two sides will pursue expert exchange and mutual consultation on the existing strategies in order to facilitate the further development and improvement of their strategic orientation.

Building on this expert exchange, each municipal partnership will develop a joint programme of action for the SDGs that will include the planning of concrete targets and measures, and the allocation of human, financial and time resources for their achievement. The programme of action will include measures in both municipalities that will subsequently be implemented through the partnership. The Service Agency will provide financial support for the piloting of a first joint measure.

### b) Approach 2 (bottom-up): Learning by doing



This approach will begin with a process of dialogue on the understanding and importance of the SDGs in the two partner municipalities. This will focus on Goals 11 + 17, plus one further focal SDG to be selected by the

partnership. Based on the results of the dialogue process, a first measure will be developed for each of the two municipalities, which will then be jointly implemented. The measure should be based on

<sup>1</sup> Source: UCLG (2015): Building an Agenda. UCLG Strategic Toolkit Version 1.1, p.11

the selected focal SDG, and at the same time be directly linked to Goals 11 and 17 and possibly others too. It should also be planned and implemented on a cross-departmental basis. Subsequent reflection on the joint lessons learned during implementation will enable the two sides to strategically plan further cooperation on the SDGs. The Service Agency will provide financial support for implementing the pilot measure.

### **What will be agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)?**

The MoU will be concluded between the Service Agency and the municipalities participating in the project, and will provide the basis for cooperation in the project. Through the MoU the signatories will commit to the above project goals, i.e. to establishing a dialogue on the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) within the partnership, and to building strategic cooperation to help achieve them. The MoU will also specify the inputs to be provided by the Service Agency and the participating municipalities in the course of the project.

### **What are the terms for the expert missions?**

- Expert missions will take place on a reciprocal basis within the municipal partnerships on terms similar to those for other delegation visits.
- The expert missions are designed primarily for municipal employees from the relevant specialised departments and administrative units involved.
- The purpose of the expert missions is professional dialogue on the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs).

### **What inputs will the Service Agency provide for the expert missions?**

- Travel expenses (outward and return journeys)
- Travel within the partner country for purposes of official business (based on the principle of cost-effectiveness/in accordance with the German Federal Travel Expenses Act).
- Costs for visa and any necessary vaccinations
- Costs for accommodation and board
- Logistical support when planning journeys
- Costs for an interpreter may be met

The Service Agency recommends that to eliminate dependency on interpretation services and facilitate sound and long-term development of the partnership, it is a good idea to establish a single working language, e.g. English.

### **What inputs will the experts/the respective municipality provide for the expert missions?**

- The staff members to be assigned will be released for the duration of the expert mission and the corresponding preparatory period, while continuing to receive their salaries (official business trip).
- The municipality will agree the dates and duration of the mission directly with partner municipality and notify the Service Agency in good time.
- The assigned experts will be responsible for submitting their travel expenses to the Service Agency.
- Brief report to be submitted after the mission.

### Participating Municipalities:

Germany	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Gelsenkirchen	Zenica
Gera	Goražde
Leipzig	Travnik
Langenhagen	Bijeljina
Wolfsburg	Sarajevo
Germany	Serbia
Pfaffenhofen an der Ilm	Valjevo
Offenbach am Main	Zemun
Ingolstadt	Kragujevac
Munich/Berlin Treptow-Köpenick	Subotica
Bersenbrück	Ruma
Germany	Kosovo
Kirchhain	Viti, Smirë Village
Troisdorf	Suharekë, Mushtisht Village

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